

Taylor...from Page 1

of their family history," said Taylor.

Taylor also invites "churches, clubs, communities, organizations, etc." to submit "historical sketches along with a photograph, free of charge," and the same goes for businesses.

But what about newcomers to Towns County who claim not to be native to the county?

"No natives live here today because they were all relocated to the West in 1838 by a U.S. Army Escort," said Taylor. "That leaves only us mover-inners, and some of us moved in sooner than others. This project is for anyone who lives or lived in Towns County, loves Towns County, has or had folks in Towns County, and all others if I missed anybody."

Newer "mover-inners" should keep in mind that in 150 to 100 years, they will be as much a part of Towns County's history as the people who moved here 50 years ago today, and everyone who lives or has lived here should consider themselves a vital link to a particular instance in Towns County's history.

People interested in deepening the historical knowledge of Towns County can send

articles and pictures via regular mail to *Hearthstones of Home*, P.O. Box 101, Young Harris, Ga., 30582.

Taylor can be reached at br686@windstream.net, and submissions may also be turned in at regular Historical Society meetings at 5:30 on the second Monday of October and November. Other times can be arranged by reaching Taylor on his cell at 706-994-0218.

Also available to help craft entries is the *Hearthstones of Home* brochure, which offers guidelines and examples, and can be found at all libraries, city halls, and many churches and businesses throughout the county, as well as at the *Towns County Herald* office.

Taylor also urges people to utilize the first volume of *Hearthstones of Home* as an example of how to complete submissions.

Towns County residents can easily visit and become members of the *Hearthstones of Home - Towns County, Georgia, History* Facebook page, which has seen its membership grow to nearly 2,500 members in the last four months.

During this time, more than 3,000 photos have been shared.

Deyton...from Page 1

day out." Deputy Deyton comes from a law enforcement family, with an uncle and cousins also serving in the law enforcement profession.

"Aaron is tough," said Union County Sheriff's Lt. Chad Deyton, of his cousin. "He did what a law enforcement officer is supposed to do. He was there to backup a fellow officer. He's going to be okay, but it was a very close call for him."

This type of crime is not the norm in Towns County, and that is thanks in large part to the office of the Sheriff.

"There's that 1 percent out there that are not like the rest of us, and they do these kinds of things," said Sheriff Clinton. "Aaron Deyton's a part of the other 1 percent that basically stands in the gap. And I've told people before, I can't say enough about how much I appreciate our deputies. They keep me and my family safe,

too. At some point, I have to go home and go to sleep. We've got good guys out there doing a great job for us."

Sheriff Clinton was immediately on the scene following the stabbing, but called in Region 8 special agents from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in Cleveland to take the lead in the investigation.

"I feel like that's always the appropriate thing to do when we're this involved, and one of our deputies was stabbed," said Sheriff Clinton. "They've come in and taken the primary. We're assisting them in everything. I mean, anything they need from the Sheriff's Office, we're involved with."

While the GBI will be leading the investigation, Sheriff Clinton retains full faith in his deputies.

"Our guys are doing a great job, but at the same time, they're dealing with; this is their friend and their coworker, and at the Sheriff's Office, we're fam-

ily," said Sheriff Clinton. "It's just a good idea, a lot of times, to bring in an outside party and let them take the lead on it."

There's no specific timeframe for when Deputy Deyton may return to work, but that's not the primary concern at this time. His relatives say Aaron Deyton is expected to be hospitalized several more days.

"Really, what we're concentrated on is being there for him and his family, and just letting him know that the main thing right now is to get better," said Sheriff Clinton.

"His family has really articulated that, and actually asked me to relay for them as the spokesman that they're very, very appreciative of all the outpouring of support," said Sheriff Clinton. "They're focused on getting him better, and just ask that people keep him in their prayers."

Sheriff Clinton once more expressed appreciation for a man the community has

been safer with than without.

"We're very, very proud of Deputy Aaron Deyton and the service that he's rendered to the community," said Sheriff Clinton. "Certainly our hearts are with him, and we're with him and his family in this time."

And though Deputy Deyton has been through a storm many people will never weather, his thoughts are for those around him and not of himself.

"Any concern that he was able to articulate to us, he was just looking out for other people immediately," said Sheriff Clinton. "Especially his wife - he immediately was wanting to make sure she was okay."

"He's a real hero and just a fine, fine individual, and we're very proud of him, and we would definitely ask the community to keep him and his family in their thoughts and prayers."

BOE...from Page 1

conducted by Dr. Behrens to explain the need for increasing the school portion of property taxes.

"I would like to go ahead and make a motion to go up, instead of 2 mills, maybe 1 1/2, to try to help out and alleviate, and just see if we can continue doing some of the cutbacks where we can, and still try to help the community out the best we can," said Board Member Michael Anderson.

"I agree with that," said Board Member Donna Hedden, who then asked for discussion.

"As long as you're lower, because you've advertised higher, you can do it," said Dr. Behrens.

"And what I've heard from the community at these hearings is they'd rather us go up smaller amounts more often, I guess, than where we were trying to hold off as long as we could, trying to help," said Hedden.

One of the reasons the board held back on raising the millage rate in recent years was to wait for the economy to bounce back.

"I'm hearing that they would rather us go up more often than a large amount at one time," said Hedden, before reaffirming Anderson's motion.

And though the board of education may have set the millage rate, it's still not cut and dry what individual taxpayers can expect to pay now for their upcoming taxes.

This is because each property owner in Towns County who is a full-time resident gets a homestead exemption, which effectively lowers the amount of property taxes owed.

But homestead exemptions vary from household to household, as the determination of these exemptions depends on both age and income.

And while property taxes are still going up, the board decided to compromise over concerns put forth by Towns County taxpayers.

"Sometimes these things aren't just a clean process," said Dr. Behrens. "Sometimes you go through and you look at things, and you assess and you reflect - and I think that's what the board did."

Lowell...from Page 1

out to support Lowell," said Principal Gibson. "I think it validates who Lowell is and what Lowell's about, and anytime you can recognize somebody that gives to our community, our school, our kids the way Lowell does, it's always a good thing. And so, we were honored to do that for Lowell."

Assistant Coach Shannon Moss read over the loudspeakers to all who would hear the official declaration of the softball field as Lowell Nicholson Field, as it was written on a plaque presented to Lowell by Principal Gibson.

"October 2, 2014, Towns County High School officially named the Fastpitch Softball Field in honor of Lowell Nicholson. Lowell has faithfully served Towns County Athletics for more than 40 years, starting as a student manager in the late 1960s and today as Sports Photographer for the *Towns County Herald*. Lowell threw out the first pitch ever in our inaugural fastpitch season in 2002.

"It is our honor to name TCHS Softball field after our

very own No. 1 Fan, Lowell Nicholson."

And Nicholson remembers that first pitch like it was yesterday.

"They didn't tell me they were going to do it, and I said, what are all these people doing up here - there were that many that showed up," said Nicholson. "When I got there, Coach Shannon Floyd was the athletic director, and he said, 'We've got somebody here today that is going to throw out the first pitch.' And I didn't have any idea it was going to be me. And when they announced my name, I had tears in my eyes, because I didn't know they were going to do that."

People started calling the field Lowell Nicholson Field after that day, a day that culminated in the dedication 12 years later.

"I'm glad they're doing this for Lowell," said Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall before the event, who deftly deflected a pre-game practice foul tip bare-handed as it came barreling down on Nicholson. "Everybody I've talked to about it is proud of him."

Nicholson would like to thank a great many people who turned out to support him that day, including Union County Sheriff Mack Mason, the entire youth football team, several umpires he considers to be friends, and his pastor and second cousin Billy Nicholson.

"I want to thank the people from my church that came, too, from Pine Top Baptist Church over in Union County - the church has supported me in it and everything," said Nicholson. "The preacher even got up and read the plaque in front of the whole church Wednesday night - tears were in my eyes."

Also making the Nicholson appreciation list of people who made the day special was attendee Ed Ash of Hayesville.

"I've known Ed for 40 years or longer," said Nicholson. "Ed and me are good friends, just like Coach Darryl McClure. I used to play softball with Ed and Darryl."

The list goes on.

"I just want to thank Mr. Gibson and all of them for doing that, including the board of education and the entire

school system," said Nicholson. "And I also want to thank Charles Duncan for coming, and Kenneth West for allowing me to work for him for all these years. Thanks to Coach Jessica Berrong and Coach Brandon Rowland for letting me be in the dugout - it was great just being in the dugout and supporting the kids."

Channel 4 showed up to film the event, which aired locally Saturday night.

"I finally made it on the TV," joked Nicholson. And to top it all off, the Lady Indians won the day with a resounding shutout of Providence Christian Academy.

"That made my day," said Nicholson. "Good luck to all the seniors - I'm going to miss them next year."

But when all was said and done concerning the dedication and the game was underway, Nicholson went right back to doing what he does best.

"I took my pictures like any other day," said Nicholson, perfectly capturing the humility for which he has come to be known. "Like I said, it's not about me, it's about the kids."

Super...from Page 1

of take over what he had been doing," said Snipes. "I would like to introduce you to the members of the coalition. We have a very diverse group, and we have some great meetings and some great ideas that come out of them."

Along with Snipes, B.J. Peters serves as vice chair and Ann Atchison acts as secretary for the coalition.

Other members include former teacher and principal Marsha Elliott; Eric Barrett of Barrett & Associates Insurance; Angi Smith, who is the vice president of student development at Young Harris College; Harold Koppel, a captain with Towns County Fire and Rescue; Chief Ranger Harkins of the GFC; and Fire Management Officer Demas.

Coalition member Smith received a special award for championing the first Firewise campus at Young Harris College.

Representing the Georgia Forestry Commission, Wiles delivered a presentation on Firewise Communities and the dangers of wildfire.

"October is National Fire Prevention Month, and as part of this coalition, we have decided that we would broadcast the news that fire is dangerous, and you need to be protecting your home, structures and your property from wildfire," said Wiles.

Wiles highlighted 2014 wildfire statistics, citing the number one cause of wildfire in Georgia as burning debris, which came in as causing a hefty 48.5 percent of wildfires.

"By calling the Forestry Commission or going online, you can get a permit," said Wiles. "They will let you know

what the weather conditions are, what the anticipated weather conditions will be, and if it doesn't look like a good day to burn, they won't give you a permit."

Burning without a permit can lead to trouble and costly bills if the fire gets out of control, as whoever started the fire would have to pay for putting the fire out and whatever structures caught fire as a result.

Wiles went over the steps to cultivate a Firewise home, and Towns County Firefighter Keyes reinforced many of those steps in his presentation of the Ready, Set, Go! Program.

"This is a concept of understanding wildfire and preparedness in Towns County," said Keyes.

Where Firewise looks to wildfire prevention, the RSG initiative aims to prepare people for the eventuality of fire.

To be Ready, one must have a home that is Firewise. To be Set means to have "situational awareness when a fire starts." And Go! charges citizens with leaving early and knowing where to go when a wildfire breaks out.

Chief Ranger Harkins gave testimony on how effective Firewise has been in Towns County. According to the latest estimates, Fannin County has had around 54 fires this year, Union County 35 and Towns County only 6 or 7.

"You can see how effective Firewise is in Towns County," said Harkins.

To learn how to become a Firewise Community, residents can talk with their Firewise neighbors, speak with Towns County Firefighters or go online at www.firewise.org.

Homecoming...from Page 1

Athens Academy Spartans at Frank McClure Stadium.

Last year's Homecoming Queen, Ansley Vardeman, crowned Davis, who was escorted by her father.

Davis has participated in competition cheer and cheerleading, and is currently a member of several clubs, including the Beta Club and FBLA. She is also the vice president of her senior class.

First runner-up for Homecoming Queen was Ashley Abrahamson, and rounding out the girls for Homecoming Court were: Karlie Albach, Angel Benedict, Josie Brown, Misty Lindemuth, Mia Manto, Jessie Poole, Alexis Roach and Olivia Ware.

This year's Homecoming King was announced at a pep rally in the school auditorium Friday, and the honor went to Alejandro Lemus-Gomez.

"I just want to say thank you so much," said Lemus-Gomez at the rally, who was nearly tackled in a hug by one of his fellow Court members immediately following the announcement.

"I've only been here for a year, and you guys crown me for Homecoming," said Lemus-Gomez. "Thank you so much."

The young men who shared the stage with Lemus-Gomez on Homecoming Court were: Grayson Carver, Kyle Davis, Cory Ellis, Efrén Figueroa, Gabe Gilliland, Boone Moss, Trace Moss, Cruz Shook and Zach Sewell.

Many air band acts followed the coronation of Lemus-Gomez, in which students and faculty pretended to play instruments and sing songs each group had selected.

Towns County High School Softball Coach and



Homecoming Queen Kayla Davis and King Alejandro Lemus-Gomez with the 2014 TCHS Homecoming Court at halftime of Friday's game against Athens Academy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

teacher Brandon Rowland portrayed a spot-on Axl Rose alongside fellow faculty in a rocking rendition of the Guns N' Roses classic *Sweet Child O' Mine*.

High School Cross Country Coach Jeannie Ledford embodied Bon Jovi with a hard-hitting version of *Wanted Dead or Alive*.

Freshmen showed their sweet side, performing Def Leppard's *Pour Some Sugar On Me*, while the sophomore class chose to reenact a more diabolically Halloween-themed *Thriller*.

Ultimately, the winners by popular demand delivered a kickin' homage to Florida Georgia Line's *Cruise*, and these talented young juniors were asked to perform an encore.

Also Friday, the winners of the best Homecoming float were announced following the crowning of Davis as Homecoming Queen.

"The senior and soph-

omore classes were paired together, and the junior and freshmen classes were paired together," said Towns County High School English Teacher and Grand Marshal for the Homecoming Parade Sarah Morrison.

This year's Homecoming Theme was TCHS Superheroes.

"Both floats had a 'Gotham City' inspiration, with superheroes fighting off the enemy, the Spartans," said Morrison, who is also system Teacher of the Year.

The floats debuted in Thursday's Homecoming Parade, and High School Principal Jonathan Gibson had selected three members of the community to secretly judge the floats.

"It was probably the best turnout, I'm assuming, that we've had so far, as far as number of participants in the parade," said Principal Gibson. "The streets seemed

to be packed, and it was a good turnout - we've heard nothing but positives from it, and our kids had a blast."

Students worked hard building their floats, working until 9:30 at night Sunday through Wednesday.

But only one of the floats could win, and the freshmen and junior classes walked away with that honor.

The winning float featured students dressed up in an all-star cast of superheroes: Wonder Woman, Superman, Captain America, Batman, Spiderman, the Incredible Hulk, Iron Man and more.

There was even a caged Spartan, representing Homecoming game opponents Athens Academy, and the float shot little blue foam footballs into the crowd from an air gun.

"The community came out and had a good time," said Principal Gibson. "It was good to see."

Hiawassee Hardware sold to CNRG; new experience ahead

Mississippi-based Central Network Retail Group LLC has purchased Hiawassee Hardware, the company announced.

The transaction was completed on Monday, according to Jimmy R. Smith, chairman of CNRG.

"We are excited about the addition of Hiawassee Hardware to our team in Georgia," Smith said. "With this acquisition we now operate five stores in Georgia."

Hiawassee Hardware was founded in 1947 by H.D. "Dick" Paris Sr. and has served the community's hardware and lumber needs for 67 years.



"Hiawassee Hardware is a great fit with our strategy at CNRG," said Boyden Moore, president of CNRG.

"Dan (Paris) and his team have built great relationships with their customers over the years. We are excited to invest in this opportunity and help im-

prove Hiawassee Hardware's ability to take care of their customers' needs. This will be a great example of the synergy that CNRG was designed to create."

Dan Paris, who has worked in the business with his father since 1980, and as-

sumed full responsibility for the business when his father died in 2011, said he was pleased to have a new association with Central Network Retail Group.

"I know that they will carry on our tradition of dedication to our customers and community," Dan Paris said. "We thank our customers for their support and generosity through the years and look forward to their continued patronage in the years to come."

CNRG is converting the store from Ace to Orgill. CNRG will introduce some new category of products, work to improve merchandising, and implement new computer systems.

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